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ABSTRACT

In many areas of higher education there is a growing trend away from the traditional demonstration-lecture-discussion format of instruction toward a participative, experiential approach to teaching. This is particularly evident in the field of psychology. In conducting an undergraduate course in the psychology of personal adjustment, if one views the class as a potential demonstration laboratory in human relations, it becomes possible to adopt an experiential approach to the subject through the use of a workshop format. This technique has been developed and employed with considerable success in one college setting. The first phase of the project is presented as a highly structured sequence of events. The second phase is conducted much more flexibly, allowing both the class and the instructor considerable latitude for exercising spontaneity and inventiveness. Based on student feedback the laboratory approach to the teaching of the psychology of adjustment and effective interpersonal relations possesses considerable appeal. (Author/KE)

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A Workshop Format for a Course In the Psychology of Personal Adjustment

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A Workshop Format for a Course In the Psychology of Personal Adjustment

Myron Brender

Abstract

This paper presents a detailed description of a workshop or laboratory approach to the teaching of a course in the psychology of personal adjustment. The reader is apprised of a procedure for establishing such a workshop and is given step-by-step instruction in how to conduct it from one meeting to the next. A method for integrating the use of a specific textbook in the workshop format is also suggested.

In many areas of higher education today there is a growing trend away from the traditional demonstration-lecture-discussion format of instruction toward a participative, experiential approach to teaching. This is particularly evident in the field of psychology where the subject matter lends itself readily to this type of innovation (Brender, 1974; Kolb, Rubin and McIntyre, 1970; Levy 1972; Snyder, 1972).

In conducting an undergraduate course in the psychology of personal adjustment, if one views the class as a potential demonstration laboratory in human relations, it becomes possible to adopt an experiential approach to the subject through the use of a workshop format. The following account describes how this technique has been developed and employed with considerable success in one college setting.

The first phase of the project, which comprises somewhat less than the first half of the semester, is presented as a highly structured sequence of events. The second phase, which occupies the balance of the semester, is conducted much more flexibly, allowing both the class and the instructor considerable latitude for exercising spontaneity and inventiveness.

Course description.

The syllabus description of the course identifies the course objectives as two-fold: to help the student to achieve greater self-awareness; and to help the student to develop greater sensitivity toward others.

Self-awareness is defined as the ability of the individual to recognize, to identify, and to report with accuracy his

immediate feelings, thoughts, and attitudes. Sensitivity is defined as the ability of the individual to sense accurately the feelings, attitudes, and thoughts of others with whom he is interacting, and to respond appropriately to them. Enhancement of both kinds of ability results in improved personal and interpersonal adjustment.

Preliminary Considerations

In planning the course, which is based loosely on the model provided by Malamud and Machover (1965), two techniques for structuring the first class meeting were considered. The first one, subsequently abandoned because its success depends upon the instructor being initially unknown to all of the members of the class (a condition which seemed unlikely to obtain in an advanced course in psychology in a small department in a small school), is essentially an adaptation of Bion's (1959) approach to his initial psychotherapy session with his groups at Tavistock.[1] It would have required the instructor to enter the classroom anonymously, seat himself inconspicuously among the members of the class, and deport himself as if he were simply another student. It was expected that eventually the group would grow restless and resentful of the unexplained absence of the instructor. At the point at which some of the less patient members of the class would have decided to leave the room in protest against their abandonment, the anonymous instructor would have intervened by raising for the group's consideration the possibility that the unidentified instructor might be present in the classroom, although unrecognized. Speculation in this vein, under the guidance of the participant-

instructor, would lead to further conjecture about the possible identity of the undercover instructor and about his motives for remaining incognito in this peculiar manner. When the identity of the instructor is finally revealed, each student would be invited to look into himself and report to the others his reactions to this opening incident. This would serve as the first formal exercise toward cultivating fuller self-awareness.

During this initial survey of the class' introspections, it was expected that the existing seating arrangement would also emerge as a focus of group concern. Because the chairs in the classroom are usually arranged in rows facing in one direction, attention inevitably would be drawn to the disadvantage of this type of arrangement for group interaction. The group's subsequent decision to rearrange the chairs in a circle so that each student faces the others would be its first experience in achieving joint control of its environment, a step toward building group cohesiveness.

Phase One

Introducing the course. The approach eventually adopted for the course opening is a more conventional one. The instructor assumes his traditional position at the head of the class and dispenses the usual course-structuring information regarding textbooks, assignments, examinations and attendance, characteristic of the first meeting of any class. After disposing of these preliminary housekeeping chores, the instructor initiates student interaction by having each one introduce himself to the others, indicating the name he wishes to be known

by and sharing with them anything of interest or significance about himself that he wishes to divulge. During the course of this activity, as expected, the seating arrangement presents itself as an issue for group consideration. After some deliberation, the necessary spatial adjustments are made. Afterward, the social roles enacted, as well as the contributions made by the students to this first spontaneous group activity, are identified by the instructor as appropriate material for psychological examination and are subjected to intensive scrutiny by the group. The instructor then indicates that this kind of analysis is one kind of psychological exercise the class can expect to engage in recurrently throughout the semester.

The second class meeting. The session opens with a reintroductory "go-around" of the group in which each student again identifies himself to the others displaying some personally meaningful object in his possession and reporting its history and his feelings about it. Alternatively, the student can describe to the group some favorite childhood recollection of a person, an event, an activity, or an object and his feelings about it (Malamud and Machover, 1965).

The class is then given an opportunity to express its reactions to this exercise and to all other aspects of the workshop experience. The instructor pursues each student's contribution in whatever direction and to whatever depth he feels to be appropriate. In so doing, he models for the class the kind of responsive behavior they will be expected to display while engaging one another in this type of interaction. If time permits, the instructor then proceeds to elicit student reactions to the behavior he has just modeled for them.

The third class meeting. The students are informed that on signal from the instructor they will all leave their seats, proceed to a clear area in the center of the room and mill about in silence, randomly, until by some means of non-verbal communication they will have succeeded in forming a group of four. The foursome will then retire silently to the periphery of the room and occupy adjacent seats. When all groups of four have been formed and seated, on signal from the instructor members of each group will report to the rest of the class how they managed to assemble their group without speaking to one another, and the feelings and thoughts they experienced during the process.

Following completion of feedback, the members of each group arrange themselves in a four-man circle, join hands, close eyes, and remain silently in this position until the instructor, at the end of a two-minute interval, signals them to open their eyes again. Each student now shares with all the others the feelings and thoughts he experienced during the two-minute interval of silence.

The exercise concludes with a group discussion of the psychological significance of the day's activity, i. e., the opportunity it provided for the practice of introspection and for the recognition and identification of one's thoughts and feelings, as well as the chance to engage in self-disclosure and to share a common experience with others.

The fourth meeting. On signal from the instructor the students converge in the center of the room and mill about in silence until they succeed in acquiring a partner whom they are interested in getting to know better. The partners retire

in silence to any pair of adjacent seats. When everyone in class has paired off (odd man left attaches himself to any twosome of his choice), the partners proceed to interview one another intensively in order to get to know as much about each other as they can within a fifteen-minute interval. How the interview is conducted is left to the discretion of the participants. Some couples will systematically allocate half the alloted time to one member to serve as interviewer, and then have him change roles and act as interviewee, whereas others will prefer to proceed on a spontaneous mutually interactive basis.

At the expiration of the fifteen-minute interview period, the partners are invited to introduce one another to the rest of the class by having each partner recount the salient features of his partner's biography elicited during the course of the interview. The audience, including the instructor, participates by commenting and raising questions at the conclusion of each introduction.

Upon completion of this exercise, the instructor invites class discussion of the psychological significance of this activity.

The fifth meeting. The students are told to look around the class and make note of those people with whom they have never interacted in a small work group. Starting arbitrarily with any student, the instructor directs that student to select three others from among those with whom he has never worked before and to gather them in one area of the room in adjacent seats. This selection process is repeated until all class members have been gathered into four-man groups.

The foursomes then arrange themselves in circles, close their eyes, and are told to visualize in detail a happy experience in their lives. After a two-minute interval of recollection, the students are instructed to open their eyes and to describe to one another, as vividly as possible, the experience visualized and the associated feelings evoked.

In the general discussion that follows, the instructor invites each group to describe to the others how the feedback process operated in its group, and which contribution(s) were found to be most stimulating. Each member of the class is then encouraged to express his reactions to and his evaluation of the exercise.

If time permits, the class is also asked at this point to report its reactions to the workshop experience to date.

The sixth meeting. As in the preceding meeting, a student is selected at random and directed to choose three others with whom he has never worked. This process is repeated until every student is selected for inclusion in a group. The groups are assigned for discussion the topic: "The most important thing that has ever happened to me in my life."

Subsequently, individual reactions to the contributions made within each group and evaluations of the psychological significance of the exercise are fed back to the entire class.

Time permitting, a second discussion topic is assigned: "My most frustrating experience." Reactions, comments, and evaluations are again invited at the end of the exercise.

In general, the instructor usually withholds his own observations until student contributions have been exhausted: occasionally he deliverately refrains from commenting, in order

to encourage maximal student participation.

The seventh meeting. The students are requested to distribute themselves in different parts of the room according to birth order position with oldest children in one area, youngest children in another, middle children in yet another, and only children in their own area. Homogeneous four-member buzz groups are formed and directed to explore the specific experiences they have had by virtue of their birth order. The instructor emphasizes to the participants that their focus should be on clarifying what each student's birth order position meant to him individually rather than on seeking out common patterns shared by the group. If, however, common patterns emerge spontaneously during the course of discussion, they need not be ignored (Malamud and Machover, 1965, p. 210).

Individual reactions, comments, and observations are solicited by the instructor at the conclusion of the exercise.

The eighth meeting. The instructor recruits five volunteers for an undisclosed exercise to be performed before the rest of the class. The volunteers are sent from the room with written instructions which they each are to read but not discuss among themselves. When they have read and understood the instructions, they are to return to the classroom, and to occupy five seats which have been arranged in a circle in the middle of the room. The audience knows nothing about what is to take place.

The action then proceeds according to the written instructions, which are as follows:

"You are in a lifeboat with four other people. Only four of the five people in the boat can remain aboard if the party is to survive long enough to reach land safely. One of your group of five has to go overboard into the shark-infested water.

Your job is to create a character (an identity) for yourself so that the other people in the boat will be convinced that they need you to remain aboard with them if they are to survive long enough to reach land. You can claim as many skills and abilities for yourself as you wish as part of your identity, in order to make yourself indispensable to the group.

At the same time that you are building yourself up as a necessary member of the group, be alert for any opportunity to tear down the claims of any or of all of the other members of the party so that they don't succeed in making themselves seem to be as valuable, or more valuable, than you are for the survival of the group.

Your chance for survival depends on how good a case you can make out for yourself, and how well you can succeed in demolishing the claims of the others."

If time permits, enactments of the situation can be presented by more than one cast. Each enactment is followed by a discussion during which each member of the audience indicates his choice of the character to be sent overboard, and the reasons for his choice. The cast expresses its own preferences at the close of the audience discussion. The possible psychological significance of the various attacks and defenses displayed by the cast is also analyzed at this time. At the conclusion of the exercise, the instructor leads a discussion on the concept of spontaneity and its relevance to the concept of personal adjustment.

The ninth meeting. Selecting students at random, the instructor directs each one to find three others with whom he has never worked in a group, and to form a unit of four in some isolated part of the room.

The groups are assigned as a topic for discussion the following question: "Suppose you suddenly found you were in some kind of trouble. Whom could you turn to for help or for comfort?"

At the close of the group discussions, the instructor invites individual reactions to the contributions made within each group, as well as judgments regarding the psychological significance of the exercise. He, in turn, points out specifically that the topic lends itself to reflections concerning trust, self-disclosure, and the need for nurturance.

If none of these, or related, issues have been touched on by any of the groups, the instructor may question their omission. If, as happens on occasion with any assigned discussion topic, some students express resistance to a particular topic or to the discussion format in general by claiming that they find it uninspiring, dull or boring, the instructor wonders aloud about the psychological significance of the group's reactions, particularly in view of the varied psychological dimensions implicit in those topics selected for discussion and the intensive interaction usually generated by the small-group discussion format.

Often the class' response to the instructor's challenge generates as much valuable material for psychological scrutiny as do some of the formal exercises themselves.

The tenth meeting. Prior to this meeting, students are asked to volunteer to bring to class with them a deck of ordinary playing cards. Those who bring cards are directed to select a group composed of students with whom they have not yet worked. The number of groups selected and the size of each group depends upon the number of decks of cards available.

Each group sits on the floor in a circle. The cards are dealt until everyone in the group has the same number of cards and there are at least three cards left in a draw-deck. The draw-deck is placed face down in the center of the circle. The first one to get rid of all of his cards is the winner. The winner gets rid of his cards by correctly identifying the emotions expressed by the other players, and by accurately communicating emotions to the others.

The player to the left of the dealer selects a card from his hand and places it face down in front of him. He is now the expresser; the remaining players are expected to identify correctly the emotion he expresses. He expresses the feeling represented by the card, according to the code below. The other players check their hands to see if they have a card that matches the emotion that was expressed. If so, they place the card (or cards) face down in front of them. If not, they pass. When all the cards have been placed down for the first round, they are all turned face upat once. If one or more of the players have matched the expresser's cards, the expresser puts his card and all the matching cards face down on the bottom of the draw-deck. Any of the players who put down a wrong card must return it to his hand and draw an additional card from the top of the draw-deck. He draws the same number of cards from the draw-deck that he put down in front of him. If no other player, however, matched the expresser's card, then the expresser failed to communicate. He returns his card to his hand and draws a penalty card from the draw-deck. The receivers return their cards to their hands but do not draw penalty cards.

If someone holds two or three cards of the same emotion,

he must play all the cards if he plays one of them. As expresser or receiver, one may get rid of two or three cards, or one may have to draw two or three cards.

The expresser uses any nonverbal behavior he wishes to use in order to communicate the emotion he is portraying. He may not use vocal cues. No words may be spoken. He may involve other players by touching them or engaging them in a nonverbal interchange.[2]

The cards represent the following emotions:

2 = contentment	9 = anger
3 = shyness	10 = hope
4 = indifference	Jack = happiness
5 = fear	Queen = joy
6 = frustration	King = warmth
7 = loneliness	Ace = love
8 = sorrow	

After the game, discussion centers around identifying the best expresser and the best receiver in each group, the most difficult and the easiest emotions to express, and the most difficult and the easiest emotions to differentiate.

The eleventh meeting. As in earlier meetings the instructor randomly selects students to form groups of four with others with whom they have not worked previously. The groups are assigned the NASA Moon Landing Agreement Exercise (Rosenfeld, 1973, p. 41).

Instructions are as follows:

> You are a member of a space crew originally scheduled to rendezvous with a mother ship on the lighted surface of the moon. Due to mechanical difficulties,

however, your ship was forced to land at a spot some 200 miles from the rendezvous point. During re-entry and landing, much of the equipment aboard was damaged and, since survival depends on reaching the mother ship, the most critical items available must be chosen from the 200-mile trip. Below are listed 15 items left intact and undamaged after landing. Your task is to rank order them in terms of their importance for your crew in allowing them to reach the rendezvous point. In column "A", place the number 1 by the most important item, the number 2 by the second most important, and so on through number 15, the least important. When finished, wait for further instructions.

	A	B	C	D
Box of matches	_	_	_	_
Food concentrate	_	_	_	_
50 feet of nylon rope	_	_	_	_
Parachute silk	_	_	_	_
Portable heating unit	_	_	_	_
Two .45 calibre pistols	_	_	_	_
One case dehydrated Pet Milk	_	_	_	_
Two 100-lb. tanks of oxygen	_	_	_	_
Stellar map (of the moon's constellation)	_	_	_	_
Life raft	_	_	_	_
Magnetic compass	_	_	_	_

	A	B	C	D
5 gallons of water	_	_	_	_
Signal flares	_	_	_	_
First aid kit containing injection needles	_	_	_	_
Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter	_	_	_	_

Each member of each group fills in column A by ranking each item in order of importance for survival. When column A is completed, each group discusses the ranking of the items in order to arrive at a consensus for the group. The group ranking is entered into column B. Each group then selects a representative to meet with representatives from each of the other groups in a new "fish bowl" group in the center of the room. Here, under the observation of the rest of the class, the new group attempts to arrive at a consensual ranking of the items on the list. Any member of the audience who feels that the viewpoint of his group on any item is not being adequately represented by his representative has the right to replace his representative in the fish bowl group by simply tapping him on the shoulder and taking his seat. Unless he replaces his representative, however, no member of the audience has the right to participate in the discussion of the fish bowl group. Instead, the members of the audience are expected to make note of the interactions displayed during the fish bowl discussion, and to classify the roles taken by the various discussants. To provide the audience with an interaction analysis scheme, the instructor devotes some time before the fish bowl activity to a description and an explanation of Bales' group interaction conceptualization, and the categories used by him (Rosenfeld, 1973, pp 26-29).

When the fish bowl group arrives at a consensus, its ranking is entered in column C. The instructor then supplies the correct ranking according to NASA. This is entered in column D.

The NASA ranking, and additional scoring directions are as follows (Rosenfeld, 1973, pp 59-60):

1. Two 100-lb. tanks of oxygen
2. Five gallons of water
3. Stellar map
4. Food concentrate
5. Solar-powered FM receiver-transmitter
6. 50 feet of nylon rope
7. First-aid kit with injection needles
8. Parachute silk
9. Life raft
10. Signal flares
11. Two .45 caliber pistols
12. One case dehydrated Pet milk
13. Portable heating unit
14. Magnetic compass
15. Box of matches

Scoring. Subtract your ranking number for each item from NASA's ranking number. Add these differences. The lower the sum of the difference scores, the more favorably your rankings compare with NASA's.

Example:

	Your Ranking	NASA's	Difference
Box of matches	8	15	7
Signal Flares	14	10	4

Explanation. These are the answers supplied by the NASA scientists. The answers are split into two groups: physical survival and traveling to the rendezvous.

1. and 2. Without air and water it would be impossible to survive for even the shortest amount of time.
3. The map is necessary for locating your own position, as well as determining the proper direction to the mother ship.
4. Food concentrate supplies the daily food required for what might be several days of traveling.
5. The FM receiver-transmitter may allow for contact with the mother ship, and may serve as a distress signal transmitter.
6. Nylon rope helps in mountain climbing and tying injured together.
7. The first-aid kit contains valuable oral pills or injection medicines.
8. Parachute silk offers protection against the sun's rays.
9. The life raft serves to carry supplies or injured and provides shelter. The CO_2 bottles may serve as self-propulsion devices.
10. Flares may also serve as propulsion devices, and, when in the line of sight of the mother ship, may serve as distress calls.
11. The guns may also serve as the basis for making self-propulsion devices.
12. The dehydrated milk is heavy and useful only when mixed with water.

13. The heating unit is useful only if you landed on the dark side of the moon. The usual problem is overheating, and not cold.
14. The compass is useless since the moon probably has no magnetic poles.
15. The matches are useless because there is no oxygen on the moon.

Subsequent discussion centers about an examination of the social interactions displayed in the fish bowl discussion group, as well as in the preceding buzz groups, and how these can be classified in accordance with Bales' formulation and understood as expressions of some of the basic principles of group dynamics.

The twelfth meeting. Each student is presented with a copy of an adjective check list (Johnson, 1972, pp 29-30) on which he is to circle six to ten adjectives he thinks are most descriptive of himself. Each student, in turn, then shares with the class the adjectives he has circled and gives his reason for circling them. His classmates respond by indicating, whenever possible, the adjectives they would have circled if they were to describe him and the reasons for their choices. Although no more than five to ten minutes is spent on each student, it may be necessary to devote part of the next class meeting to the completion of the exercise. If more time remains to be filled in this supplementary meeting, a filler exercise is introduced to complete the hour. A good exercise for this purpose is one described by Slater (1970, p. 94) in which primary process symbolization is demonstrated by having a panel of students seated in front of the rest of the class, select a male or female name for a number of objects. The objects suggested by Slater include: a soft scarf, a large nail, a sharpened pencil, a paper cup, a

rubber band, a pitcher or vase, a wooden match, and a piece of string or yarn.

The instructor then guides the group as it considers the following questions: Is there any agreement among the participants with respect to giving these objects masculine or feminine names? Do any of these objects seem to possess common characteristics which might account for this agreement, if it exists? What light, if any, does this demonstration shed on the Freudian concept of symbolism?

The thirteenth meeting. In today's activity, the Chinese Portraits game (Slater, 1970, pp 93-94), the class functions as a single unit. One student volunteers to serve as the "primary process communicator". He selects from the class a panel of four male and four female students. From this panel he chooses to think of one student whom the rest of the class must identify from his answers to their questions, such as: "If he or she were a color, what color would he or she be?" "If he or she were a piece of furniture, what piece of furniture would he or she be?" "If he or she were a food, what kind of food would he or she be?" "If he or she were an automobile, what kind of automobile would he or she be?" And so on.

The exercise can be repeated with other communicators and other panels, or in two-man work teams with one member acting as communicator and selecting as his target some member of the rest of the class whom his partner must identify from his responses.

The ensuing class discussion deals with various aspects of communication and with primary process symbolization.

The fourteenth meeting. The class is seated in a circle and each student, in turn, chooses from among his classmates those

whom he would like to have as members of a surrogate family. He is free to fill as many family roles as he wishes, and he may even disregard the sex of his nominee in filling any particular family role if he so desires. The reasons he gives for making his choices constitute material for class discussion and examination when he has completed his selection. Some students serve as tally-keepers and note the number of times a given student is chosen to occupy a particular role. At the conclusion of the exercise, the tally-keepers' results are analyzed for whatever information they may yield.

The fifteenth meeting. This session marks the end of the first third of the semester and is devoted to an evaluation of feedback obtained in response to the query, "What do you think or feel about this class so far?"

If time remains in the hour, each student is given an opportunity to respond to the incomplete statement, "The kind of person I can't get along with at all is..." The responses are examined for their psychological significance.

Phase Two

The sixteenth meeting. The class is informed that this meeting begins a new phase in its training, one in which it will be expected to acquire the skills of effective communication and to put them into practice in its classroom activities. As the first step in this interpersonal effectiveness training program, the first two chapters in Johnson's Reaching Out (1972) are assigned for home study.

The class is then presented with a hypothetical situation: "You have decided to drop out of school, and you have to break the news to your parents. Think of how your mother would probably react to this information. Think of how your father would react

to this information. Try to imagine their reactions in such detail and so vividly that you could enact for us their reactions, using the words, gestures, and expressions that they might typically use if you were to break this kind of news to them. If there are any other members of your family who might have strong feelings, one way or another, about your leaving school, you may try to imagine and to portray their reactions as well. When you think you've reached the point where you could enact their reactions, even though you may be self-conscious about doing so in front of the class, please raise your hand."

When an appreciable number of students have indicated their readiness to depict the responses of their parents to their decision, the instructor calls for a volunteer to enact the situation. The student is asked to decide if he will play the role of his parent, or of himself. He must select others to play the remaining familial roles. By switching from one role to another as often as is necessary to illustrate for the other players the personalities of the characters they are to portray, the volunteer helps complete the enactment of his family's reaction to his decision. The instructor contributes guidance and direction as needed and may encourage extension of the performance to include enactments of alternative ways of dealing with crucial aspects of the situation. Depending upon the time available, more than one family reaction may be enacted. Time for discussion is set aside after each enactment.

Should class interest warrant it, this exercise can be continued through the next meeting.

<u>The following meeting</u>. After the preceding warm up exercise, a full-scale role-playing program is introduced using some, or all,

of the scenarios below, and carried through as many meetings as class interest warrants.

1. a) 'One of your parents discovers that you are dating someone of another race. Act out what happens when your parent confronts you with this information."

   b) "You feel you should inform your parents that you are dating someone of another race regularly. Act out what happens when you break the news to your parents."

2. "You have to inform your parents that you are planning to marry, or have already married, someone of another race. Act out what happens when you break the news to them."

3. "You find that you are pregnant, although unmarried. Under the circumstances, you are not sure whether you should have the child or have an abortion. You feel you should consult your parents in this matter. Act out what happens when you break the news to your parents."

4. "Your mother discovers some birth control pills in your dresser drawer when she puts some of your clean clothes away. You had forgotten they were in there and now she confronts you with her discovery. Act out how she is likely to break the news to you, and how you would probably react to it. Would she involve your father in the matter? How would he react to it? Would it matter to you if he were also involved by your mother?"

5. "Your mother finds some narcotics in your younger sister's (or brother's) dresser drawer when she puts some of her clean clothes away. How would your mother

react to this discovery? Would she involve you, or your father, or other members of your family in this matter? How would she confront your younger sister with this discovery? What role would you play in this confrontation? Act out what would be likely to happen under these circumstances."

Each enactment is followed by an intensive discussion of key aspects of the dramatization.

At the close of the last role-playing session, the instructor assigns for home study the third and fourth chapters in Reaching Out (Johnson, 1972). Once again the class is reminded that it will be expected increasingly to apply in its classroom interactions the principles of interpersonal effectiveness with which it is becoming acquainted through its reading assignments.

Didactic meetings. The next four, or more, sessions are devoted to the discussion and clarification of the material assigned in the textbook. The concepts of trust and self-disclosure are examined, as is the process of effective communication and its contribution to overall interpersonal effectiveness. Illustrative material gathered by the instructor and drawn from ordinary daily events, as well as from incidents and interactions occurring in the classroom throughout the term, is introduced at this point to demonstrate in concrete detail the application of the concepts discussed. This practice also serves to model for the class the manner in which they are expected to connect abstract principles to actual behavior.

Because the conclusion of the didactic sequence falls approximately at the midterm, the session that follows usually is given over to a formal midterm examination, which deals both with the material covered in the textbook readings and with some

of the experiential material encountered by the student during the course of his earlier workshop activities.

Post-midterm meetings. The session after the midterm examination is spent in reviewing the test questions and answers in order to provide the students with immediate corrective feedback. During the course of this review, whenever it seems appropriate to do so, the instuctor models the techniques of active listening, selective reinforcement, and conflict management in his interactions with the students interrupting the process periodically to be sure that the class recognizes what it is that he is demonstrating. As the opportunity arises, the instructor also actively encourages the students to begin to apply to each ongoing situation the techniques of effective communication that they have been reading about. In this way the spontaneous interactions of the group are put to use as training grist for the workshop mill.

As a change of pace, the next period marks a return to planned workshop activities.

Groups of three are formed. One member, designated as leader, recounts an unfinished fantasy situation (Johnson, 1972, pp 31-32). Each member of the trio invents his own ending to the fantasy which he then writes out or stores in memory until all members of his trio indicate that they too have completed their endings to the fantasy. Then, each member in turn proceeds to share his creation with the others. When all endings have been described, the group undertakes an analysis of each contribution with a view toward uncovering whatever insights it can about the author's personality. During the analyses, the students are encouraged to practice with one another the communication techniques they have been studying. The instructor moves from one trio to another attempting, as best he can, to monitor the

various interactions and to provide corrective feedback where necessary. The students are urged to take special note of any interactions they witness or participate in which they feel are particularly apt illustrations or demonstrations of points made in their textbook: situations or interactions which they believe to be particularly rich in unexplored psychological potential also are to be noted for possible future development as workshop activities.

New triads are formed for each new fantasy dealt with, and the process of devising and analyzing endings is repeated for all eight fantasies described by Johnson. When available, original unfinished fantasies submitted by students are substituted or included in the exercise. The class decides how many sessions it wishes to devote to this exercise: at its conclusion, the exercise is evaluated by the class.

Concurrently with the workshop activities, throughout the balance of the course, the instructor continues to assign readings in the text at the rate of one chapter for approximately every two workshop meetings. At strategic points in the course (usually between exercises) at least one class meeting is reserved for discussion of material covered in the text. If the students indicate difficulty in comprehending this material, or in applying it in their workshop interactions, additional time is set aside for further discussion and clarification.

Subsequent meetings. Ordinarily, at this stage in the semester, the students and the instructor together have managed to accumulate among themselves a substantial number of incidents which have occurred spontaneously in the workshop meetings and in other classes, and which now can serve as role-playing scenarios. Often, these real-life incidents can be put to use to spark far-

ranging, or intensely probing, discussions in areas that readily lend themselves to the application of those psychological principles and procedures to which the student has been exposed throughout the term. Consequently, the instructor now finds himself in a position where he has less need to rely upon artificially prepared exercises for use in the workshop. Nevertheless, as a fall-back measure, and as a means for building up a resource back-log, on occasion the instructor may find it expedient to assign to each student the task of bringing in five suggestions for role-playing scenarios which touch on conflicts, problems, or interactions which seem to him expecially important. These can be drawn upon as the need arises.

Ending the course. In accordance with a general college requirement, an endterm examination, which in this case is comprehensive in its coverage of textbook material but selective in its inclusion of experiential material, officially brings the semester to a close. The workshop, however, concludes with a sociometric exercise that occupies the last three class meetings and elicits strong student involvement.

On the first day of the exercise, each student is given a copy of the following questionnaire to fill out (adapted from Rosenfeld, 1973, p. 172). The instructions are as follows:

If you had to choose, whom would you choose for each of the following? (Consider the entire class excluding yourself as a population from which to choose.)

1. For a discussion leader: _____
2. To work with in solving a problem (rank order):

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

3. As an interesting conversationalist:

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

4. To be marooned with on a small, tropical island:

   _____

5. To travel across Europe with for a summer:

   _____

6. To escort your boyfriend/girlfriend across Europe for a summer: _____

7. To ask for help if you were having some personal problem: _____

8. Not to work with in solving a problem:

   a. _____

   b. _____

   c. _____

9. Most intelligent: _____

10. As a date: _____

11. To kick out of the life-raft for safety reasons:

    _____

12. To discuss a new idea with: _____

13. To invite to a party:

    a. _____

    b. _____

    c. _____

14. Not to invite to a party:

    a. _____

    b. _____

    c. _____

The instructor appoints tally-keepers for each item. When the questionnaires have been completed, each student reports his responses, giving his reasons for his choices. The tally-keepers record the choices, feeding back to the class, at the end, the results for each item.

If time remains in the session, the floor is immediately thrown open for reactions to the exercise and to the results. If no time remains, discussion is deferred until the next meeting. Often, reactions are sufficiently extended, complex, and significant to require the third meeting for adequate ventilation and resolution of feelings and attitudes generated by the responses to the questionnaire.

Occasionally, however, the third session is given over instead to a retrospective evaluation of the entire workshop experience with particular reference to its contribution to the class' overall understanding of the psychology of personal adjustment. Based on student feedback obtained under these circumstances, as well as from other sources such as the student grapevine, and from enrollment figures which continue to reflect strong student interest, the laboratory approach to the teaching of the psychology of adjustment and effective interpersonal relations possesses considerable appeal.

Footnotes

1. A description of this approach is included for the benefit of those who might wish to attempt it.
2. These directions are paraphrased from Johnson, 1972, pp. 110-111.

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